Subsequent paragraphs unfold this 'much more' as motherhood in the Spirit, embracing 'each and every one in the Church, and... each and every one through the Church'.[28] It is no doubt significant that it is by way of the title 'Mother of the Church' Paul VI added at the variously reported scene in the Council aula that John Paul interprets ecclesio-typicality here. Mary's ecclesial motherhood is a matter of her *motherly mediation* which not only parallels the role of the Church vis-à-vis Christ but comprehends or embraces that role in its multi-generational and worldwide diversity and totality.

As I have sought to show, that deployment of a maximalising Mariology in terms of ecclesio-typicality is not an invention of the Pope's. Ecclesio-typicality does not equate with low Mariology: it can, however, as the so-called 'decade without Mary' in the 1970s shows, lead down to it, and probably all revisiting of *Redemptoris Mater* makes the late Father Karl Rahner turn a little in his grave.

[28] Ibid., 47.

Redemptoris Mater Revisited

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Redemptoris Mater Revisited

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Introduction

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see what Pope John Paul II was aiming at in the writing of this encyclical. Of course, it seeks to present the Mariology of the Catholic Church: so much could go without saying. The question is, though, *How* did the Pope seek to present Mariology; what particular aim did he have in view in writing about it? All expressions of doctrine are situated in one way or another; so likewise, presumably, this.

During the pontificate of Paul VI, and despite the latter's best efforts, a rather negative impression had gained ground about the Mariological intentions of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council. Basically, three assertions were quite commonly made.

First, the decision of the fathers not to devote a separate document to the Blessed Virgin Mary but to tuck away an account of her at the end of a document on a far wider subject was motivated by the desire to cut down to size what was seen as a hyper-inflated pre-Conciliar estimate of the place of our Lady in the Christian life.

Secondly, their decision to incorporate a reflection on Mary in, specifically, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, was born of a desire to shift the natural location of Mariology from Christology to ecclesiology. When, via the dogma of her divine Motherhood, the Virgin had been located in closest possible proximity to her Son, and thus to the entire Blessed Trinity to whom she was uniquely related by being the mother of the second divine Person in his human birth, she stood as a consequence over against the Church rather than within the Church. After all, the Church only begins to exist, surely, once the incarnational Economy has actually been established.

Thirdly, within that new context of ecclesiology rather than Christology, by treating the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model of

discipleship, the exemplar of the obedience of faith, something most clearly signalled by her Annunciation fiat, the Conciliar fathers sought to present her as essentially another member of the Church (if also by virtue of her reaching in her Assumption the goal of the Church, its most eminent member).

In adopting the so-called ecclesiotypical Mariology favoured by a variety of writers influenced by the movements of *ressourcement* in the early and mid twentieth century Catholic Church, a majority of the bishops, counselled no doubt by their theological advisers, sought to insinuate, so far as was compatible with already defined dogma, a low Mariology that would be more acceptable to separated Christians, above all in the West.

What John Paul II sought to do in *Redemptoris Mater* was to challenge this overall interpretation of the mind of the Council, as read by progressive theologians and Church commentators from the mid-1960s onwards. The encyclical seeks to show that an ecclesiotypical Mariology (one that treats Mary in terms of the Church) can be a very high Mariology indeed, and moreover that it does not need to be defined over against a Christotypical Mariology (one that treats Mary in terms of the Word incarnate). It considers that, read in its own terms (rather than in terms of the politics behind the scenes in the Council aula), the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* supports rather than subverts these two propositions – especially if it is taken in conjunction with Paul VI's proclamation, during the Conciliar event, of Mary as *Mater Ecclesiae*, 'Mother of the Church'.[1]

The encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* is comparatively short, only occasionally repetitive, and is written in clear prose. It is also easily available in its (as usual) beautifully produced Catholic Truth Society version. It may also be already familiar to many readers of this Paper.

[1] This is very much the view taken in F. Frost, 'Mother of God and Mother of the Church', *The Month* CCLVII. 1548 (1996), pp. 500-506.

So I shall not summarize it here, though I shall very definitely come back to it at the close.

What I propose to do is, rather, to give what I see as its crucial background: an account of the rise of that ecclesiotypical Mariology which, at the Council, more conservative bishops feared, more liberal bishops applauded, and to show why I think John Paul II was right in his conviction that neither the fears nor the applause were justified.

The rise of 'ecclesio-typical' Mariology

The period of the 1940s and 50s was characterized by the rise to fame and fortune of a kind of Mariology which used the demand for more attention to biblical and traditional – meaning, above all, patristic – sources so as to challenge the kind of Marian thinking found in the Latin church since the Catholic Reformation, of which the Neo-Scholastic Mariological style, hitherto dominant, not least in the preparation of the 1950 dogmatisation of the Assumption of the Virgin by Pope Pius XII, was itself one variant. The father of that Counter-Reformation Mariology was the chief Spanish representative of Baroque Scholasticism, Francisco Suárez, with whom Mariology, defined by the starting-point of divine Motherhood, became a distinct treatise in its own right.[2] The movements of biblical and patristic *ressourcement* threw up a new (or was it, rather, very old?) kind of Mariology which soon acquired the nickname of 'ecclesio-typical', over against, 'Christo-typical', Mariology.

As already explained, this was to be a type of reflection which linked Mary not so much to Christ – which had been the case in all early modern and modern Mariology hitherto – as to the Church, or, to put it more sympathetically, linked Mary to Christ only in, with, and through the Church, the messianic people, prepared in the Old

[2] Thus his 1585 treatise, *Quaestiones de Beata Virgine Maria.*

Testament, launched on its great adventure in the New. The tension between Christotypical and ecclesiotypical Mariologies hardened into outright conflict at the time of the Second Vatican Council.

Conflict at the Second Vatican Council

That this was so is explicable not only because the two Mariologies gave very different answers to the question, 'What is the primary or fundamental principle of all Mariology', a question put in that form as early as the middle 1930s. The sharpening of the tension between Christo-typical and ecclesio-typical Mariologies set the fathers of the Second Vatican Council at loggerheads for another reason too. The question of whether one should take as one's Marian starting-point Mary and the Church, or, alternatively, Mary and Jesus Christ, became entangled with another and quite different question: namely, whether in Catholic belief and practice the Marian element should be minimalised or maximalised, and indeed whether one's attitude to the de facto Marian patrimony in the Church should be, in a vocabulary suggested by the leading French Mariologist René Laurentin, 'critical' or 'mystical' (for which latter term he also proposed as a quasi-synonym, 'devout').[3]

Thus several somewhat ill-assorted enquiries came to be lumped together. First, does the evidence of Scripture and the Fathers indicate that Mary's relation to the Church is more constitutive of her theological significance than is her relation to Christ? Secondly, should Mariology have one single primary or fundamental principle, governing all the rest? Thirdly, had Marianism in the Catholic Church gone too far and, for pastoral reasons, of which the most obvious was the demands of ecumenical convergence with separated Christians, did it need to be cut back? Fourthly, what was the proper epistemic mode in

[3] R. Laurentin, 'Un problème initial de méthodologie mariale', in H. du Manoir, S. J., (ed.), *Maria. Etudes sur la Sainte Vierge* I (Paris, 1948), pp. 697-706.

which to practice Mariology – an objective mode of knowledge, concerned as far as possible to treat the textual evidence neutrally, or at least coolly, with the professional historian's sobriety, or, alternatively, by an engaged mode of knowledge which looked at the same evidence in the light of the wider conviction that the Mother of the Redeemer had always been spiritually present to the faithful and continues to be so today.

Once one distinguishes out these four enquiries it becomes obvious, or so it seems to me, that what alarmed the more conservative bishops and theological advisers at Vatican II was not the theme of 'our Lady and the Church' as such (how could that be threatening in itself?), but the combining of all four issues into a synthetic whole of a distinctive kind. One synthetic combination of the four could run as follows: the ecclesio-typical approach, predominant in Bible and Fathers, is itself the fundamental governing principle of all Mariology, on whose basis Mariology should be practised, vis-à-vis the developed Marian tradition, minimalisingly, and in a critical epistemic mode. This was the synthesis, or to put it less flatteringly the cocktail of opinions, which produced the low Mariology of the later 1960s and 70s, itself extended through Liberation Theology into the 1980s. Mary of Nazareth is sublime chiefly as a representative of the faith (or, in Liberationism, the hope) of the wider Church. In reality, however, the four issues I enumerated are perfectly separable. The ingredients of the cocktail can be separated out as in a fruit cocktail rather than the sort of cocktail served at a bar.

Ressourcement writers on 'Our Lady and the Church'

What, then, did theologians of biblical and patristic *ressourcement* have to say about the theme of 'our Lady and the Church'. In the revival of Catholic biblical scholarship in France such writers as Lucien Deiss, a Spiritain, better known after the Second Vatican Council for his scripturally inspired liturgical music, had combined an historical

approach to the mystery of salvation with a retrieval of biblical typology, understanding the latter as the key to the literary structure of the Scriptures that witness to that mystery. In so doing, writers like Deiss aimed to show that Mary was, in a celebrated phrase, 'the Church before the Church', *l'Eglise avant l'Eglise.*[4] In other words, our Lady was the climactic spiritual ending of the chosen people of the Old Covenant and at the same time the dawn – the first instalment – of the renewal of that people in Christ. She was the personal passage between the Old and New Testaments, the Church before its deployment in the faith and hierarchical organization of the apostolic mission. In Mary, the personification of Israel as the daughter of Zion of the prophetic books or the bride of the Song of Songs in the Wisdom literature at last received full expression in flesh and blood reality.

Needless to say, such exegetes made much of the bifocal quality – at once Marian and ecclesial – of the Woman clothed with the Sun in Apocalypse 12. They found that the intercessory role of Mary at Cana in the second chapter of St John's gospel recalls the function of the praying Church. They expatiated on Mary's role as mother of believers in the Johannine Passion narrative. The 'Israel according to the Spirit' whom Christ wedded to himself on the Cross according to Ephesians 5 is, they said, embodied in the New Eve of the Church personified in Mary, an echo of whose wedding with the Redeemer resounds in Paul's betrothing the Corinthian church to Christ in Second Corinthians 11:2, 'as a pure bride to her one husband'.

Some of this exegesis was itself indebted to patristic commentary, but the chief patrologists who contributed to the emergence of ecclesiotypical Mariology were German-speaking, not French. The fundamental reference point was the Swiss German Alois Müller's impressively erudite study *Ecclesia-Maria*, 'Church-Mary' (in

[4] L. Deiss, *Marie, fille de Sion* (Paris, 1959).

English that would sound better as 'Mary-Church').[5] The author, born in 1921 in Solothurn, the most Baroque (paradoxically!) of Swiss cities, gave his book the explanatory sub-title, *Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche*, 'The Unity of Mary and the Church'. Confining himself to the Fathers of the age before the Council of Ephesus, Müller found that patristic ecclesiology asserted both the virginity of the Church, identified with the purity of the Church's faith, and the motherhood of the Church, itself linked with the Church's bridal character, by which motherhood the Church as the Spouse of Christ brings her children to birth in faith by means of the waters of baptism. These two inter-related features – virginity, motherhood – evidently recall (whatever we are to make of this fact) the virgin mother of Jesus. In some sense, then, for major players in the ante-Ephesian epoch, the virginal motherhood of the Church began in Mary.

Thus among the Western writers before Ephesus: for Tertullian, in the treatise *On the Flesh of Christ*, the New Eve is both Mary and the Church. For Ambrose, in the little book *On the Institution of Virgins*, virgins are called to imitate at once Mary and the Church, meditating on the beautiful mysteries prophesied of Mary as figure of the Church, while in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke Ambrose maintains it is because Mary is the type of the Church that she had to remain for ever a virgin. As for Augustine, with whom Müller's survey of the Latin Fathers ends (he died in 429, the year before the Council was summoned), whereas the bishop of Hippo can refer to Mary minimalisingly as one of the Church's members, a portion of the Church, he also calls her 'truly the mother of [Christ's members] which we are'.[6]

Where the Orientals are concerned, one name will have to suffice, that of St Ephrem, the most graphic of Müller's witnesses, since

[5] A. Müller, *Ecclesia-Maria. Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche* (Freiburg in der Schweiz, 1951; 2nd edition, 1955).

[6] Augustine, *de sancta virginitate*, 6.

he gives the Church the title 'Mary' as well as calling both Mary and the Church spouse, mother, and daughter of the divine Son (though, as with all references to Ephrem by non-specialists, some caution about authorship is necessary since so much in early Syrian Christianity was passed down under his name).

If Müller put down the torch at Ephesus, it was taken up again, so far as the Western patristic tradition was concerned, by Leo Scheffczyk, a Silesian ordained priest for the Munich archdiocese and made cardinal by John Paul II (he died in 2005). In contrast to Müller, Scheffczyk did not choose to introduce the parallel between Mary and the Church into the actual title of his key work, and yet he makes it plain that 'the mystery of Mary in the piety and teaching of the Carolingian age' (the name of his ground-breaking study, *Das Mariengeheimnis in Frömmigkeit und Lehre der Karolingerzeit*), includes very importantly the self-same parallelism: Mary-church.[7]

Thus for example, among the authors Scheffczyk discusses, Paschasius Radbert in a commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew, had described Mary as prefiguring and preparing the Church which, by Mary, is united to the Bridegroom, while a sermon on the Assumption ascribed to another Carolingian figure, Ildephonsus of Toledo, asserts that all the goods diffused in the Church are spread abroad from a starting-point in Mary.

These investigations by German theologians into the ecclesio-typical bearings of patristic texts about Mary stimulated the publication in Rome in 1954 of a study drawn from an otherwise unnoticed thesis from the year of the outbreak of War, 1939, on the Mary/Church parallel in the Latin tradition till the end of the twelfth century.[8] The Breton Jesuit Hervé Coathalem who, after completing his doctoral

[7] L. Scheffczyk, *Das Mariengeheimnis in Frömmigkeit und Lehre der Karolingerzeit* (Leipzig, 1959).
[8] H. Coathalem, S. J., *Le parallelisme entre la Vierge et l'Eglise dans la tradition latine jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle* (Rome, 1954).

work, was to sink into comparative obscurity in Jesuit Universities in the Philippines and Vietnam, had been able to show that the somewhat inchoate ideas of the Carolingian divines passed into the immediately pre-Scholastic authors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In these writers, so Coathalem showed, it is a commonplace that the Church is mirrored in Mary and Mary in the Church – the Church, that is, as holy mother Church, the virgin bride of Christ.

A particularly fine example of this reciprocal figuration idea – two realities mirroring each other – is found in the English Cistercian Isaac of Stella's fifty-first Sermon, of which the key section is included in the Office of Readings of the 1974 Roman Liturgy of the Hours.[9] In a further example, the canon regular Godfrey of St Victor describes the Church as reborn from Christ's opened side on the Cross – emphasizing 'rebirth', rather than simply 'birth' – since, he affirms, the Church's original birth was in Mary, whom Godfrey calls *prima Ecclesiae persona*, the 'first person of the Church'.[10] Again (but by now we are in the thirteenth century), an early Franciscan writer, Conrad of Saxony, seeking to explain the ecclesial priority of our Lady, asserts that Mary holds in plenitude the ecclesial perfection distributed out in more partial ways to the saints.[11]

Why, then, did the high Scholastics – Thomas, Albert, Bonaventure and the rest – fail to integrate the theme *Ecclesia-Maria* into their systematic work? In one suggestion, the orchestration of that theme was too dependent on images to be readily translated into the formal language of the schools, though we can note that is hardly true of the reference to Conrad's *Speculum beatae Virginis Mariae* just noted.

[9] For the Second Saturday of Advent in *The Divine Office. The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite*, I (London, 1974), pp. 94-96.
[10] Godfrey of St Victor, *In nativitate beatae Mariae* , cited G. Philips, 'Marie et l'Eglise. Un thème théologique renouvelé', in H. du Manoir, S. J. (ed.), *Maria. Etudes theologiques* VII (Paris, 1964), pp. 363-420, and here at p. 391.
[11] Conrad of Saxony, *Speculum beate Mariae Virginis,*, 7, cited G. Philips, 'Marie et l'Eglise', art. cit., p. 389.

For whatever reason, the Mary-Church motif finds expression chiefly in the lyrical devotional texts of the high Middle Ages, texts contemporary with the great Scholastic Sentence commentaries and Summae. I have in mind such devotional statements as Francis of Assisi's *Salutatio beatae Mariae virginis* which opens: 'Ave Domina, sancta regina,/ sancta Dei genitrix Maria,/ quae es virgo ecclesia facta.' 'Hail, o Lady, holy Queen,/ holy Mother of God, Mary,/ who are the Virgin made Church.'[12] The grammatical form of *virgo ecclesia facta*, 'the Virgin made Church', here reflects, we can note, the Christological confession of Scripture, *Verbum caro factum*, 'the Word made flesh'. And Francis's salutation continues in praise of this 'Virgin made Church': 'In qua fuit et est/ Omnis plenitudo gratiae et omne bonum', '[You, Mary] in whom were and are/ all the fullness of grace and every good'.

In these biblical, patristic, and post-patristic references we have a perfectly adequate legitimation for writing Mariology ecclesiotypically, at any rate in the sense of writing a Mariology that makes the motif of Mary's relation to the Church one of its key themes. Notice, however, that the movements of biblical and patristic *ressourcement* – to which I've added elements of a 'going back to the sources' of mediaeval Christianity of a kind little appealed to in Neo-Scholasticism – do not necessarily require us to say that the Mary-Church theme is the *dominant* theme of the Mariology of the first millennium and beyond, only that it is *one* major theme. And this is hardly a controversial claim.

Enthusiasts for this theme may sometimes wish, of course, to assert its predominance in this or that writer, which is fair enough. To assert its predominance, over against all other Mariological approaches, in both Scripture and the tradition of the first ten or twelve centuries, would be, however, far more disputable, not least because of the sheer quantity of texts involved (liturgical and epigraphical as well as in the various literary genres used by the Fathers and mediaevals, not to

[12] For this *Salutatio beatae Mariae virginis* see *Ecrits. François d'Assise* (Paris, 1981), p. 274.

mention the iconographic sources). But even a successful assertion of the predominant role of an ecclesio-typical Mariology in the Tradition at large would not lead to the total supplanting of a complementary Christo-typical Mariology, unless that assertion were combined with the claim that ecclesio-typicality constitutes the primary or fundamental principle of all Mariological thinking which – by definition, then – must govern systematically (comprehensively, exclusively) all authentic Marian discourse.

A fundamental principle for Mariology?

As I mentioned, discussion of a fundamental first principle in Mariology dates from the 1930s. Initially, that discussion took place in the context of the Christo-typical Mariologies which had set the tone in Latin Catholicism since the early seventeenth century when what were in effect distinct Scholastic tractates on Mariology began to be written. I said earlier that Mariology as a distinct project within the wider theological enterprise is generally credited to the Baroque Scholastics, and the chief name to stress here would be the Spaniard Francisco Suárez, the outstanding Scholastic theologian of the Jesuit Society.[13] Suárez's Mariology derives entirely from the doctrine of the divine Motherhood, and in this it forms the culmination of a line that runs from Cyril of Alexandria through Thomas Aquinas. The inauguration of a quite explicit debate over a fundamental first principle for Mariology came about through the work of a German theologian seeking to revive Suarezian clarity as to the primacy of divine motherhood in a Mariological culture where Christo-typicalism was taking a variety of forms.

[13] He is the hero of Sarah Jane Boss's critique of modern Mariology in her 'Mary at the Margins: Christology and Ecclesiology in Modernity', *The Month* CLLVII. 1548 (1996), pp. 463-475.

This was the Cologne seminary professor Carl Feckes (1894-1958), co-founder of the *Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Mariologie*, and well-known in the German Catholicism of his time as the disciple and continuator of the celebrated nineteenth century dogmatician Matthias Joseph Scheeben, the premier modern German Catholic theologian till displaced by Karl Rahner. In his 1935 essay, 'Das Fundamentalprinzip der Mariologie', later expanded into book form under the same title, Feckes opined that any choice of a fundamental principle that is *not* the divine Motherhood 'would violate the direction sanctioned by all tradition'.[14] The discussion thus opened up continued throughout the next thirty years, though never more polemically so than in Rome, behind the scenes, as well as in the aula, at the Second Vatican Council. Feckes would hardly have been pleased had he seen the consequences of his intervention, since the shift in favour of some version of ecclesio-typicalism as the correct answer to the question, 'How should we identify Mariology's fundamental principle?', went against the deepest grain of his own convictions.

That is not to say that Feckes in any way opposed the reintroduction into Mariology of the theme of our Lady and the Church as such. Not at all, since the influential Mariological section of the dogmatics of his master, Scheeben, had itself described Mary's divine motherhood as essentially a 'bridal motherhood' (*Brautmutterschaft*) – which we can term a Christo-typical Mariological concept with evident ecclesial implications.[15] This mother had been chosen by her Son to be his *socia*, his intimate companion and, in that sense, his bride. Participation in that relation of Mary to Christ was, for Scheeben, the key to an understanding of how the Church too is both bride of Christ and mother of Christians, who are the body of Christ. Scheeben,

[14] C. Feckes, 'Das Fundamentalprinzip der Mariologie. Ein Beitrag zu seinem Aufbau', in *Scientia sacra. Festschrift für Kard. Schulte* (Cologne-Dusseldorf, 1935), p. 266.

[15] M. J. Scheeben, *Mariology* (St Louis, MO, 1947), 2 vols.; see on the point at issue, I. Muser, *Das mariologische Prinzip "gottesbräutliche Mutterschaft" und das Verständnis der Kirche bei M. J. Scheeben* (Rome, 1995).

however, unlike Feckes, had never sought a Mariological *Fundamentalprinzip*. And so, again unlike Feckes, Scheeben had not opened a Pandora's box from out of which any axiom claiming to be the all-important super-axiom could at any moment fly.

An ecclesio-typical fundamental principle in Mariology

By the 1950s, the favoured opinion in a Catholic theology which considered itself to have profited by the biblical, patristic, and to a lesser degree mediaeval but non-Scholastic 'return to the sources' was to seek Feckes' primary principle not in divine Motherhood which would, of course, imply a Christo-typical Mariology, or even, for that matter in divine bridal motherhood, which would imply a Christo-typical Mariology open to its ecclesio-typical counterpart, but, rather, in an ecclesio-typical Mariology *tout court*.

An attentive observer could have noted two straws to show the way the wind was blowing in 1955, which, coincidentally, was when the full length version of Feckes' 1935 essay was published, just three years before his death. The first straw in the wind was the fifth, Mariological volume, of the influential *Katholische Dogmatik* of Michael Schmaus, teacher and examiner of a certain Joseph Ratzinger.[16] In that volume, Schmaus announced his adherence to the ecclesio-typical axiom, 'Mary is the type of the Church', taken now to be the sole primary or fundamental principle of Mariology. Schmaus went so far as to say that, while Mary's status as the type of the Church cannot be deduced from her divine Motherhood, the divine Motherhood *can* be deduced from her status as type of the Church – a claim which drew from a startled Dominican reviewer, Albert Patfoort, in the *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (the journal of the Paris Dominicans) the vigorous comment:

> To move to an historical event [i. e.

[16] M. Schmaus, *Katholische Dogmatik, V. Mariologie* (Munich, 1955).

> Mary's motherhood of Jesus] from a result obtained by a speculative route [i. e. from Mary's motherhood of the Church] presents a difficulty that is quasi-unsurmountable.[17]

The second straw in the wind from 1955 was the French Redemptorist Clément Dillenschneider's study *Le principe premier d'une théologie mariale organique* where the author, after half a lifetime of work in a Christo-typical manner on our Lady's co-redemptive role, now rejected the claims to primary principle status of the divine Motherhood, including its Scheebenesque 'bridal motherhood' version, and plumped instead for a primary principle based on what he called 'messianic motherhood', a principle which envisaged Mary as mother of the Messiah in his people.[18] This formulation, Dillenschneider thought, would bring out well the bearing of Mary's motherhood on the wider Church.

But is a fundamental Mariological principle actually necessary? Dillenschneider's starting-point could no doubt produce a rich Mariology but the question raised by the Dominican Albert Patfoort in an essay stimulated by this book was whether in Mariology or in any other area of dogmatics for that matter we need to look for, as he put it, a 'unique principle which would permit us to deduce by a rigorous inference the totality of one or another mystery. Would it be true to say, in Mariology, that the absence of such a unique principle obliges us to 'conclude to the absence of genuine necessities and close connexions in the mystery of Mary'?[19]

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[17] A. Patfoort, O. P., 'Bulletin de théologie dogmatique. Mariologie', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 41 (1957), p. 548.

[18] C. Dillenschneider, *Le principe premier d'une théologie mariale organique. Orientations* (Paris, 1955)

[19] A. Patfoort, O. P., 'Le principe premier de la Mariologie', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 41 (1957), p. 448.

Patfoort distinguishes between, on the one hand, seeking the inner organization of the data of revelation by identifying those particular data that represent some foundational aspect of the logic of the divine plan and attaching other data thereto (this he describes as Thomas Aquinas's procedure) and, on the other hand, submitting all revealed assertions to the hegemony of a single principle, posed once for all, from which in systematic theological thinking they must then be deduced – the procedure (we can suppose him to be saying) of a neo-Thomism which has, unfortunately, caught the virus of the 'spirit of geometry' from Descartes.

There is, wrote Patfoort, no a priori reason why there should not be in Mariology two – let us say – primary principles, each of them supreme in what he called a given 'register' or on a given 'line'. In Christology, Christmas and Easter, the Incarnation and the Redemption, are each primary in a certain respect. So correspondingly in Mariology the primacy of the divine motherhood – seen as a primary principle indicating all the perfections and functions which develop in Mary by virtue of her unique bond with the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ – can surely co-exist with the recognition of a second primary principle, one that reflects the redemptive purpose of the Incarnation in virtue of which Mary embodies the Word's reception inasmuch as she is herself the sign and prototype of the Church, and in that way testifies to the fullness of influence she possesses through the perfections and functions identified with the help of the first of the two co-equal primary principles thus suggested.

For Patfoort, the obsession with one unique fundamental principle was likely to lead to a constricting of the Mariological realm, with regrettable results.[20]

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[20] A far fuller account of these debates than can be offered here is found in J. Radkiewicz, *Auf der Suche nach einem mariologischen Grundprinzip: Eine historische-systematische Untersuchung über die letzten hundert Jahre* (Konstanz, 1989).

The excellence of Mary/church thinking

The criticisms that can justly be made of choosing an ecclesio-Marian axiom as the *sole* governing principle of Mariology should not blind us, however, to the qualities of the dogmatic thinking to which emphasis on the Mary/Church relation can lead. That was strikingly shown by the finest of the German presentations, from the hand of Otto Semmelroth, professor of dogma at the Jesuit Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule St Georgen in Frankfurt. Semmelroth's 1949 study 'Archetype of the Church. The Organic Construction of the Mystery of Mary', proves conclusively that ecclesio-typicalism does not necessarily lead to a low Mariology.[21]

To take just one example, but it is a crucial one, from speculation about Mary as mediatrix of graces. Scholastically trained theologians working in a Christotypical idiom in the French Catholicism of this period drew back from the assertion that sacramental grace – as distinct from 'providential arrangements' and 'actual graces' – is given through the mediation of Mary. By contrast, Semmelroth has absolutely no difficulty at all with the claim that grace in every mode, not excluding the sacramental, is communicated through our Lady. This is because he understands Mary to be, as the primal Church, the total recipient, in a single all-encompassing act of acceptance, of all the spiritual good the Saviour has to give to the world.

[21] O. Semmelroth, S. J., *Mary, Archetype of the Church* (Et Dublin, 1964). The German original of Semmelroth's book was published as early as 1949, yet fifteen years later Laurentin could write as though minimalist Mariology may be equated with ecclesio-typicality: thus his *La Question mariale* (Paris, 1963). Laurentin's personal position, however, wisely sought to combine the strengths of both approaches, ibid., pp. 101-102. Hence the maxim, 'wholly correlative to Christ, wholly correlative to the Church', adopted (in a slightly modified wording) by the present writer in *Epiphany. A Theological Introduction to Catholicism* (Collegeville, MN, 1996), p. 338.

As Semmelroth writes, the Mother of the Lord is 'the depository for the plenitude of all graces for the Church'.[22] Mary, so Semmelroth asserted in the year before the Assumption dogma was promulgated, enters eternity with this attitude intact. As he explains in his study which, incidentally, retains a place of honour in the book of essays co-written in the 1980s by Pope Benedict XVI and Hans Urs von Balthasar, on the same theme (their work is entitled 'Mary. The Church at the Source'):

> Christ stands before the Father living on 'ever to make intercession on our behalf (Hebrews 7: 25), or to use the idiom of piety, showing his wounds to the Father. Mary stands as the perpetual Orante in the eternally changeless attitude of the Church's receptivity before Christ, and she receives what the Church needs.[23]

In Semmelroth's formula, she is the 'receptive co-redeemer'.[24] These formulations demonstrate that an ecclesio-typical Mariology, even if practised to the exclusion of a Christo-typical Mariology and acknowledging its own inner principle as the sole fundamental axiom (as is the case with Semmelroth), does not *necessarily* lead to Mariological minimalism, pace certain anxieties expressed at, and after, Vatican II.

[22] O. Semmelroth, S. J., *Mary, Archetype of the Church*, op. cit., p. 106.
[23] Ibid. See H. U. von Balthasar – J. Ratzinger, *Maria. Kirche im Ursprung* (Einsiedeln, 1997, 4th edition); the English translation is *Mary. The Church at the Source* (San Francisco, 2005).
[24] O. Semmelroth, S. J., *Mary, Archetype of the Church*, op. cit., p. 106.

At the Second Vatican Council

I move now to the scene at the Second Vatican Council where the progressive party – to use the simplifying but convenient label – early set to work to derail the schema of a draft document entitled 'On the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of Men', which had been approved by John XXIII before the Council opened in the autumn of 1962.[25] A new working title was adopted a few months later: 'On the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church': a move reflecting, evidently, acceptance of ecclesio-typicality in Mariology on the part of the Roman curia and its consultors at this date. The German and Austrian bishops, however, fearing that even under the revised title such a document would be ecumenically disadvantageous put their most able peritus, Karl Rahner, in charge of re-working the schema as a whole. It was Rahner's idea that the text should be reduced to the status of a chapter within *Lumen gentium,* the Dogmatic Constitution of the Council on the Church. A signal was needed by Protestant ecclesial communities that Catholics were serious about what was termed 'Marian reform'.

The phrase 'Marian reform' covered a multitude of sins. It included at least three elements: the suppression of what were deemed barely defensible, since effectively superstitious, aspects of popular piety; the alleged incompatibility of Marian devotional exercises, most famously the Rosary, with a reassertion of the primacy of liturgical prayer; and the objections of representatives of the *ressourcement* movements in biblical and patristic studies to the form taken by much of the later Marian theology in the Church.

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[25] I use throughout this section 'At the Second Vatican Council' the anonymous article entitled '"Behold your Mother". A reconsideration of Mary's relationship to the Church in the light of the Vatican II debate over *Lumen gentium* and Paul VI's decision to intervene', published in *Inside the Vatican* (April 1996), pp. 49-53.

Above all, though, supporters of Marian reform were adamant that, in Rahner's words, the Council should avoid stirring up 'new difficulties and dangers' by proceeding to doctrinal definitions of, or even the making of large statements about, Marian mediation – Mary's role in the 'objective' and 'subjective' redemption: that is, how the work of our redemption comes about, and how it is communicated to us. Conservative bishops, notably from Italy, started to complain that the ecumenical obsessions of some of their colleagues were making it impossible to speak of traditional Catholic doctrines concerning our Lady.

What, however, surprised or even dismayed many moderates in the Conciliar assembly was the rejection of the revised title 'Mother of the Church' by a now revamped theological commission on which curialists were obliged to take a back seat. In the late autumn of 1964 Paul VI decided to intervene. On the feast of Mary's Presentation in the Temple, appealing to his personal authority as successor to Peter, he bestowed on her the title *Mater ecclesiae* which a divided episcopal body had not been able to agree. The final version of the Marian schema, the eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium*, was eventually passed by a margin of only seventeen votes in a gathering where over two thousand bishops were present: by far the closest call of any decision made at Vatican II. Making his announcement to the assembly, Paul VI declared:

> For the glory of the Virgin Mary and for our own consolation, we proclaim the most holy Mary as Mother of the Church, that is to say, of all the People of God... And we wish from now on that the Virgin should be still more honoured and invoked by the entire people under this most dear title.

But the title was not 'most dear' to absolutely everyone. The Protestant observers, wrote the Vaticanologist Peter Hebblethwaite, were not amused, and he reported that applause in the aula was limited to the Conciliar minority. Another priest journalist, Francis Xavier Murphy, writing from a position of sympathy with the Conciliar majority, went further. '[T]he grim-faced pope was carried out of the basilica through… tiers of stony-faced, unresponsive bishops, whose lack of enthusiasm was the dominant note of the proceedings'. The Verbist Ralph Wiltgren, coming at events from a different intellectual standpoint, seems to describe a different scene. 'The standing ovation which greeted this announcement signified the warm assent of the Council Fathers.' Ironically, the most distinguished of the Protestant observers, the Swiss Reformed exegete-theologian Oscar Cullmann, had felt especially negative about Rahner's darling, *Lumen gentium* 8, which was, he considered, a gun that had backfired. As he put it:

> A decision which was in fact intended to weaken Mariology has in reality made it stronger, because everything about the Church culminates, so to speak, in this chapter.

Here we must leave the voices at the Conciliar event, and instead note how Scheffczyk – thirty years later, as co-editor of a six volume German- language Marian encyclopaedia – gave himself the task of writing the article on Mary at the Second Vatican Council. He took the opportunity to speak of what he considered the 'stinginess and reticence', *die Kargheit und Zurückhaltung*, of the Constitution's eighth chapter. That was to be explained, Scheffczyk went on, 'as is openly admitted, by showing consideration for ecumenical dialogue, especially with Protestants'. But this, he concluded tersely, 'does not stop theology from saying more'.[26] To put it in terms that in recent discussion have become very familiar: here, as with everything

[26] In *Marienlexikon* (Sankt Ottilien, 1988-1994, 6 vols), II., p. 571.

concerning the Second Vatican Council, we must read texts according to a hermeneutic of continuity, not a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture.

Back in conclusion to *Redemptoris Mater*

Without using that vocabulary, whose coin still had to be minted, this is what John Paul II sought to do in *Redemptoris Mater*. The content and organization of the encyclical make two things very plain. First, the Christo-typical and ecclesio-typical principles in Mariology can be used simultaneously (this is the point made before the Council by Albert Patfoort). There is no need to choose between them. As the Pope puts it pithily in *Redemptoris Mater* 24:

> In the redemptive economy of grace brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit, there is a unique correspondence between the moment of the Incarnation of the Word and the moment of the birth of the Church. The person who links these two moments is Mary.

Secondly, it is not the function of the ecclesio-typical principle to, so to speak, lower the tone of Mariology – as compared with its Christo-typical variant (this was what before the Council Otto Semmelroth sought to demonstrate). Thus in commenting on Mary's role as 'model and figure of the Church', John Paul II describes her as in her relations with the Church 'much more' than simply model or figure.[27]

[27] *Redemptoris Mater*, 44